

The role of online mass media as a tool for the 2019 political campaign in Indonesia

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Abstract Media is a tool to provide information to be broadcasted or circulated openly to the public. In the technology era, it has a very significant role because it can influence the public's opinion as the society cannot be separated from technology. During the 'New Order' era, the authorities had censored the truth, thus forced the public to initiate regime changes that brought down the new order rulers. Then, the reformation era emerged, which prioritised public freedom, including freedom of the press and freedom of expression. This study used qualitative analysis assisted with the NVivo12 Plus application in the data analysis. The data was obtained from the internet, websites, and journals. This study explained a form of a political campaign that used the influence and impact of media to lead public opinion. This research also looked at the role of the mass media –mainly online media– in the 2019 political campaign. We found that the media's influence and role are significant and reliable to win votes and political contestation. In addition, the research also provided information about the 2019 presidential election.

Keywords: online mass media; political campaigns; role of media

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INTRODUCTION

The roles of mass media, according to Gunawan (2018), are often likened to the sun that provides the light that illuminates the world; that delivers messages that penetrates the heart of humanity; that enlightens. It means that the mass media have a particular position in people's lives. The mass media has the advantage to influence the public's minds, which may change public opinion. As Inri (2012) stated, the social theory of media is related to social interaction. It means that responsible freedom of the press requires a caution level and sound management of the mass media in anticipating the market. This condition causes the media to compete for presenting actual and reliable news. On the other hand, it makes them break their vision and mission to build public opinion. Media is also a valuable tool to generate opinions that can strongly influence the public's opinion (Fitri, 2018). In this case, political campaigns efforts such as influencing and supporting public opinion to win the political contestation were made (Fitri, 2018).

In the 1990s, autocracy controlled the post-cold war Southeast Asian democratic system, only 27 years after the political system began to withdraw. However, there were problems with the stability and quality of democracy (Aminuddin & Purnomo, 2019). One of them was in Thailand in 2019, where elections were conducted in a very flawed process. Promises for the 2014 reform were broken to produce generational gaps in ideology, personality, and regional divisions (Mc Cargo, 2019). Election as an explanatory framework in critical areas of the world, in general, is the completion of a prolonged policy transition cycle triggered by deep lines throughout the regime (Morgenbesser & Pepinsky, 2019). The Philippines is a country that has little influence on elections in a democracy that is very much in line with the causal and constitutive relations that bind elections and democracy. Some Southeast Asian countries, except for Indonesia and the Philippines, reject the theories suggested by the historical political, bureaucratic, economic and sociological negotiation models. This is due to the repressive regimes that tend to win at the speed they use to enforce restrictions in fair elections (Morgenbesser & Pepinsky, 2019).

In political contestation, the media is used as the tool to form the image of the candidates to attract constituents to vote for them (Indrayani, 2012). Several studies also mentioned that the media influenced the result of political contestation. The media helps to create advertisements and images of the political candidates. The image-making of these political candidates carried out by the mass media significantly influences the results of the election winners. In fact, the media has higher power in campaigning for the candidates. In modern politics, the media is very influential for the campaign process of the candidate. It can be observed from the elements of democracy, which prioritise freedom of the press, where the press is considered very influential in the campaign of the candidates (Nurul, 2012).

In a political contestation, the candidates create a new mechanism to campaign for themselves in order to win the political elections. Candidates use technology that can significantly influence or lead mass opinion. For instance, in 2013, the media has a very significant role in political campaigns. It enabled a certain party or candidates in conducting political campaigns or political communication. The campaigns were aimed to lead public opinion to vote for particular candidates in the election (Alami, 2014). Mass media is very influential in winning highly competitive political contestations (Pahlevi, 2018). In some countries, media became a tool to facilitate political contestation in the election. Media has a significant influence to create goals which can lead people to their desire or win political contestation (Alami, 2014). However, in politics, everything depends on the image of the candidates. Currently, the most powerful influence is how to design the image of a candidate or political party that has a positive effect on the candidate. For example, in the governor's political contestation in North Sumatra, candidates use media advertisements as a means of political campaigns (Faraidiany et al., 2019).

This research showed that the mass media (online) is very influential in the election of candidates in the 2019 presidential election. This research also explained the strong influence of certain things on the achievement of political contestation in 2019 in Indonesia. For example, a candidate who uses campaign props and advertisements on television, newspapers, and others will benefit significantly and effectively won political contestation (Martha et al., 2016). Candidates use the media as a campaign tool. Thus, the impact of the political image of a figure given or offered to the public largely determines public perception or opinion (Herpamudji, 2015)

METHODOLOGY

This research used a quantitative analysis method with a literature study approach. Data were obtained from journals, the internet, and reference related to the research topic. The analysis was conducted using application *NVivo12 plus* by using the *Crosstab Query*. According to Bogdan and Taylor, qualitative analysis is a method of study that produces concise evidence in the form of written or oral words and observable behaviour (Moleong, 2012). The method and data chosen had supported and assisted the researchers in conducting this research. This study used analysis by looking at the use of mass media (online) as a political campaign tool for candidates or even parties participating in the 2019 General Election. The subject of this research was the online-based media by studying data from various online media.

Meanwhile, the object of this research was the role of the media as a campaign tool for presidential candidates. The data collection and analysis used in this study was carried out by observing the political campaign process that began from 23 September 2018 to 13 April 2019. The time setting was chosen because the 2019 general election was a

prestigious election event between candidates who were equally strong in politics and used various media as a political tool.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Use of Online Mass Media (Media as a Campaign Tool)

The involvement of the media in politics significantly affects media users because the media does not restrict the news that is published. After all, online media content is not limited by rules that must be upheld. Media coverage so far does not distinguish between news that is political or ideological (Chan et al., 2019). The media is beneficial for the continuation of democracy building that underscores democratic political mechanisms to ensure independence in safeguarding citizens' rights and obligations. It also dramatically influences political contestation and conducting political campaigns (Chan et al., 2019). The mass media can be a complete package product for political figures to be trusted by the public. The media can also be involved in strategies to win candidates (Indrayani, 2012). Media is used consciously by candidates in political campaigns in the 2019 elections. They did not prioritise ideas and creativity in campaigns; instead, they attacked other candidates. This condition is caused by the fact that candidates can communicate directly without conventional media gatekeepers because they can better maintain their network with voters (Kurrahman, 2015).

The government also used the mass media as an instrument of power. In political contestation, the mass media is very influential in making advertisements that show the best image of the candidates in the media and the social context because politics has become a form of advertising sales (Hariyani & Nurchayati, 2015). Inri (2012) stated that the role of mass media in political campaigns could be influenced by public relations, marketing strategies, and advertisements for political candidates' image campaigns. On the other hand, research conducted by Rani (2014) states there is a need to regulate the media as a tool for candidate campaigns because it can abuse the information related to candidates. Research conducted by Valerisha (2017) mentioned that the mass media had become the fourth pillar in the contestation of democracy in which mass media can be a reference to win political contestation. In this case, the media can make public perceptions more productive.

A study conducted by Simarmata (2014) revealed that the role of the media in political contestation is very significant because it becomes a new platform of political communication efforts such as political campaigns, and information technology-based public services. Mardan (2019) gave one example of political campaigns to win the East Java Governor office by interviewing media journalists from Jawa Pos, Surya, Duta Masyarakat, and Bhirawa. By using framing analysis, the role of the media in providing campaign issues was powerful. Because certain governor candidate controlled the media, the media was not neutral towards the candidate. The media was very inclined towards certain

governor candidates who are supported by historical factors of the media establishment, media vision and mission, ideology, and editorial policy during the governor election campaign period. However, Gunawan (2019) argued that the role of the media in political contestation should prioritise neutrality, especially in providing information. Furthermore, the media must be a social control in socio-political life in society. Thus, people are not provoked in choosing a candidate because of the influential role of media on political campaigns (Firmansyah, 2018). However, the media still have to produce engaging content during the political campaign process (Kreiss, 2016).

In the political campaigns, the media turns the candidates into political celebrities by presenting them as the leading players or single actors in various media appearances (Subiakto, 2017). Research by Rosmilawati (2017) stated that the media should be neutral without any political activities which may lead to biased media. The role of the media, according to Tahir (2012) in campaigning for candidates must be well-planned because it can cost quite a lot of money, even though the use of media in campaigns is effective. Triyono (2010) mentioned that mass media must be managed properly because it can produce high electability. Likewise, Ilhami et al. (2004) argued that the media is very positive and very influential in increasing electability in the context of political campaigns.

Through mass media, competing candidates can quickly and effectively communicate or campaigning to gain victory in political contestation (Hariyani & Nurchayati, 2015). Research conducted by Suhendra (2015) revealed that the use of media in conducting campaigns is a political battlefield in the current technology-based era. Similarly, Alfiah, Susanti, Kristinna, Ardiansyah, & Pradipta (2015) stated that the use of media in political campaigns is very influential, mainly social media which is monitored and used for political party campaigns or individual candidates. The role of the media in this global era is very influential in achieving a political goal of candidates or parties (Anggoro, 2014). The mass media can be called a political actor because the media involvement is substantial in the influence of political campaigns to conduct political communication diplomacy (Andrianti, 2015). The media can also be used as a political communication tool in providing feedback from audiences and gaining information to make a political campaign tool (Siagian, 2015). Previous studies agreed that online media is an essential tool in political campaigns. This statement illustrated the influence of online media used by political candidates as a tool for campaigning.

The Role of Media in Politics

Mass media is very influential in the effort to influence the activities of people or even the power holders in political activities (Pahlevi, 2018). The mass media can lead public opinion because it can legitimise and delimitate the power of the image in campaigning, build

trust in society, or influence society with political campaigns (Sutarso, 2012). Research by Hasanuddin, Badjido, & Hardi (2015) stated that the effect of mass media is critical in the success of campaigns. The media is a very influential tool for political campaign. In addition, Arief & Wibowo (2015) mentioned that media accounts have a significant beneficial influence on political campaigns.

Nuryanti (2018) proposed some roles of mass media. Mass media can be a tool for the socialisation of programs from prospective leaders. Therefore, the public can assess before voting for the right candidate. The positive records of the candidates or parties participating in elections can be easily accessed by the public through the mass media. Hence, the mass media can be a powerful weapon in influencing public opinion and directing public perceptions to fit the initial campaign or the candidate's initial objectives. In addition, mass media can also indicate the political climate. From research conducted by Yulandari & Abidin (2017), it could be inferred that political campaigns conducted with the media using political props, including advertising billboards, produced positive results for the candidates. The media formed a public opinion in elections and made the public more sympathetic. Jati (2017) stated that media is a highly useful tool of a political campaign, both for the continuity of the elections and to encourage public opinion to become an active partisan. In a campaign, candidates who use the media have a more real impact on changing public opinion in carrying out political participation or even campaigning for themselves (Martha et al., 2016).

The power of speech of the media becomes a political choice. The media can be used as a tool of democracy by consolidating political movements, for example, in the transition from the Old Order era to the New Order. The movement is directed at reforms where the media can improve the quality of political participation, people will become more active in the public sphere, and political communication becomes more interactive (Holik, 2011). Nuryanti (2018) stated that mass media is a powerful tool to influence public opinion to carry out political campaigns easily. In political campaigns, candidates must be able to lead public opinion in the election. For instance, Faraidiany et al. (2019) analysed the victory of the candidate in the Governor of North Sumatra election. The candidates used media advertisements to lead public opinion. Besides, research conducted by Nugroho, Hidayatillah, Sumpeno, & Purnomo (2019) stated that the candidate interaction using the media during the campaign was very influential in leading public opinion.

Mass media is used as a tool for candidates in election activities as one of the strategies to win (Fitri, 2018). There are six perspectives to see the roles of media (Herpamudji, 2015). First, the media is seen as a window for the public to enable the public to see the information. Second, the media is used as a mirror of various events that are presented directly from the community to the world. Third, the media us a filter to provide or inform the news that is considered appropriate for the public. Fourth, the media is as a guide in translating or entering

directions. Fifth, the media is a forum for presenting various information and ideas that emerge from the understandings of useful information. Sixth, media is the interlocutors for social, political, and economical communication interactions. Mass media as a tool of the political campaign consists of several forms, namely online media, print media, and electronic media. These media are highly influential in a political campaign to lead public opinion to vote for a candidate. According to Zuhroh (2019), a political analyst from the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI):

"The media give a strong influence on people. Thus the media must also be morally responsible when providing information or advertising thing that is not objective and even cause conflict between the public horizontally in order to connect the campaign process through the media."

The Deputy Chairman of the Press Council (Jauhari, 2019) made similar remarks:

"The media must be objective and independent in presenting information to the public. The information presented does not contain hoaxes or lies that must be tested or accurate, so that the public gets tested and accurate information."

Table 1. Regulation of Campaign through Mass Media (Daily Newspaper)

President and Vice President Candidates	Maximum of 160 mmk x 540 mmk	Maximum of 3 media	Maximum of 21 days
Political Parties of Election Candidates	Maximum of 160mmk x 100 mmk	Maximum of 3 media	Maximum of 21 days
Candidates for the House of People's Representatives and Regional House of Representatives	Maximum of 61mmk x85mmk	Maximum of 1 media	Maximum of 21 days
Political Parties and Aceh Local Parties	Maximum of 160mmk x 100 mmk	Maximum of 1 media	Maximum of 21 days

Source: (KPU, 2019)

Table 2. Regulation of Campaign through Electronic media (Television and Radio)

	Radio	Television
President and Vice President Candidates	Maximum of 3 spots, Maximum of 60 seconds, Maximum of 3 media, Maximum of 21 days	Maximum of 3 spots, maximum duration 30 seconds, maximum of 3 media, maximum of 21 days
Political Parties of Election Candidates	maximum of 3 spots, maximum duration 60 seconds, maximum three media, maximum 21 days	maximum of 3 spots, maximum duration of 30 second, maximum 3 media, maximum 21 days
Candidates for the House of People's Representatives and Regional House of Representatives	maximum 3 spots, maximum duration 60 seconds, maximum 3 media, maximum 21 days	maximum 3 spots, maximum duration 30 seconds, maximum 3 media, maximum 21 days
Political Parties and Aceh Local Parties	maximum 3 spots, maximum duration 60 seconds, maximum 3 media, maximum 21 days	maximum 3 spots, maximum duration 30 seconds, maximum 3 media, maximum 21 days

Source: (KPU, 2019)

Table 3. Regulation of Campaign through *media internet (Online)*

President and Vice President Candidates	Maximum of 1 banner	Maximum of 5 media	Maximum 21 days
Political Parties of Election Candidates	Maximum of 1 banner	Maximum of 5 media	Maximum 21 days
Candidates for the House of People's Representatives and Regional House of Representatives	Maximum of 1 banner	Maximum of 5 media	Maximum 21 days
Political Parties and Aceh Local Parties	Maximum of 1 banner	Maximum of 5 media	Maximum 21 days

Source: (KPU, 2019)

The use of media in political campaigns is urgently needed by candidates or political parties to lead public opinion and as a propaganda effort by their candidates or parties (Defi, 2019). So, it can be stated

that political contestation must use the media as a political campaign tool. Media that report information for political campaigns are useless if they only provide stories from one side of the group. Indeed, reporting must be balanced in providing information from all candidates. To strengthen public opinion in selecting one candidate, the campaign team can use the news format to provide positive and negative news for unsupported candidates (Defi, 2019). Political campaigns using the latest technology systems allow candidates to obtain a large number of votes from targets in various regions. The use of technology or a media system does require a large budget because it benefits media users as a campaign tool that significantly influences the election victory (Hoferer et al., 2020).

In this case, the election organiser must give campaign freedom to each candidate participating in political contestation. However, the absence of rules in conducting political campaigns through the media will have an impact on the quality of users in choosing candidates. Thus, the General Election Commission (KPU) must make rules to control the campaign through the media. Tables 1, 2 and 3 present the regulations issued by the General Election Commission in regulating campaigns in the media. This rule is made so that people do not see much negative content and are not too provoked when viewing information from the media, especially online media (Kreiss, 2016).

Figure 1. Advertisement campaign regulations by KPU

IKLAN KAMPANYAE PEMILU 2019

Komisi Pemilihan Umum (KPU) akan memfasilitasi iklan kampanye peserta pemilu di media massa:

- Media cetak
- Televisi
- Radio

Menurut Peraturan KPU (PKPU) Nomor 23 Tahun 2018 Tentang Kampanye Pemilihan Umum, KPU dapat memfasilitasi penayangan iklan kampanye dalam bentuk iklan komersial atau iklan layanan masyarakat, pada media cetak, media elektronik, dan media daring.

Karena keterbatasan dana, KPU hanya akan memfasilitasi tiga titik iklan kampanye.

KPU mempersilahkan peserta pemilu melakukan iklan kampanye secara mandiri, maksimal 10 titik per hari di setiap platform media.

3 titik difasilitasi KPU

10 titik iklan kampanye secara mandiri

- Desain iklan harus dikoordinasikan dengan KPU untuk memastikan materi dalam iklan tidak bertentangan dengan peraturan perundang-undangan yang berlaku.
- Materi iklan kampanye yang dilarang dimuat: isu sara, penghasutan hingga penghinaan.

Fasilitas iklan kampanye baru akan dilakukan 21 hari jelang masa tenang yaitu 24 Maret-12 April 2019.

Tertuang dalam Undang-Undang Nomor 7 Tahun 2017 Pasal 274 tentang Pemilu dan diatur dalam PKPU Nomor 23 Tahun 2018 Pasal 24.

Peserta pemilu yang difasilitasi KPU

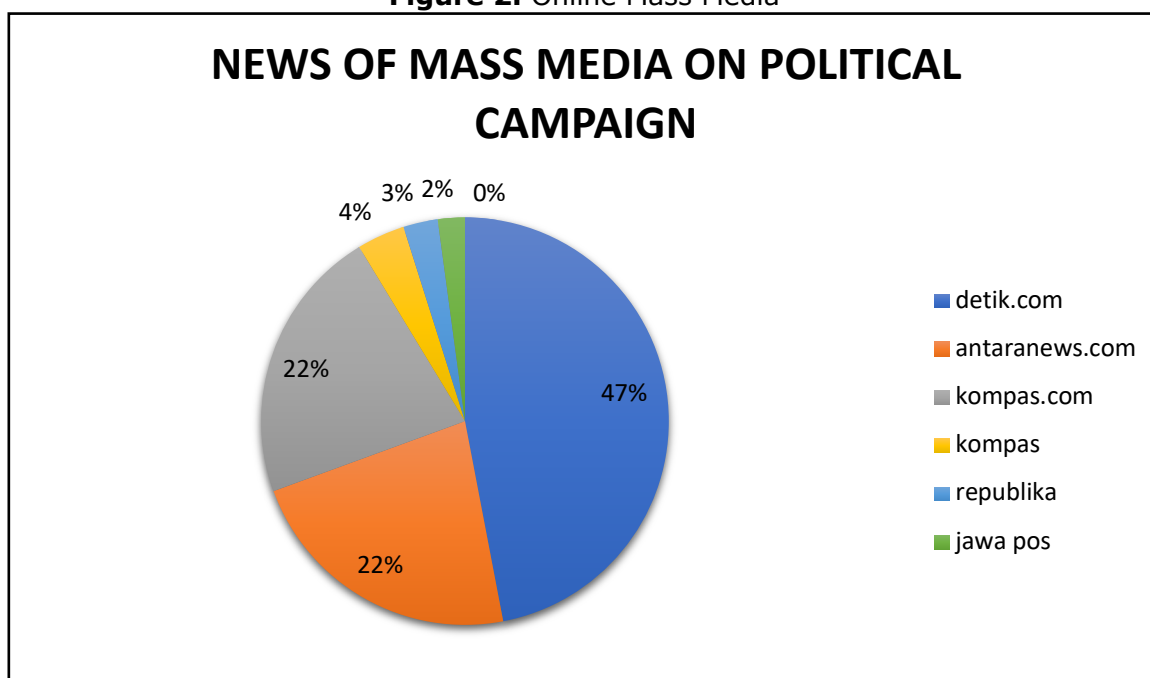
- Pasangan capres-cawapres
- Partai politik
- Calon anggota Dewan Perwakilan Daerah (DPD)

Sumber: KOMPAS.com | Infografi: Andar Shayu Tontono | KOMPAS.com

Source: Kompas.com

Political campaign advertisements are urgently needed by political candidates in political campaigns to lead public opinion. KPU, as the electoral authority, must provide regulations. Thus, the candidates do not arbitrarily carry out political campaigns. Candidate campaigns must provide information that can be accounted for, not just hate speech that is not really functioning to change public opinion effectively. Then, the political campaign must make peace until there is no noise caused by one of the candidates. As shown in figure 1, the KPU regulated the activities of political campaigns through the media.

Figure 2. Online Mass Media



Source: Data Process by Author (2019)

Figure 2 clearly showed the influence of mass media on the campaign strategy of 2019 Presidential election, which had some concrete output in leading public opinion. The results were obtained from research conducted by G. Communication in collaboration with the Indonesian Muslim Intellectual Association (ICMI). The result, from the six media, there were 1,681 reports related to the presidential election contestation during March 2019. Detik.com contributed the most news, 790 news, followed by Antaranews.com which contributed 377 news. Then, Kompas.com contributed 368 news, Kompas contributed 64 news, Republika contributed 46 news, and Jawa Pos contributed 36 news.

Meanwhile, the implementation of political campaigns carried out in the 2019 presidential election was explained in a survey conducted by Daud (2019). Daud, 2019) argued that the media is very influential in forming public opinion. As many as 62.2% of survey participants stated that the media was very and quite influential in their efforts to shape public opinion. Only 13.6% of the participants stated that the media did not influence public opinion. On social media, attempts to influence

public opinion were used in political campaigns as was done by candidate pair number 1 (Jokowi-Ma'ruf) in the 2019 presidential election. There were 61.25% accounts on social media that supported candidate pair number 1 (Jokowi-Ma'ruf). Meanwhile, candidate pair Number 2 (Prabowo-Sandi), was by around 38.75% of accounts. This result is seen in online media (Sugiarto, 2018).

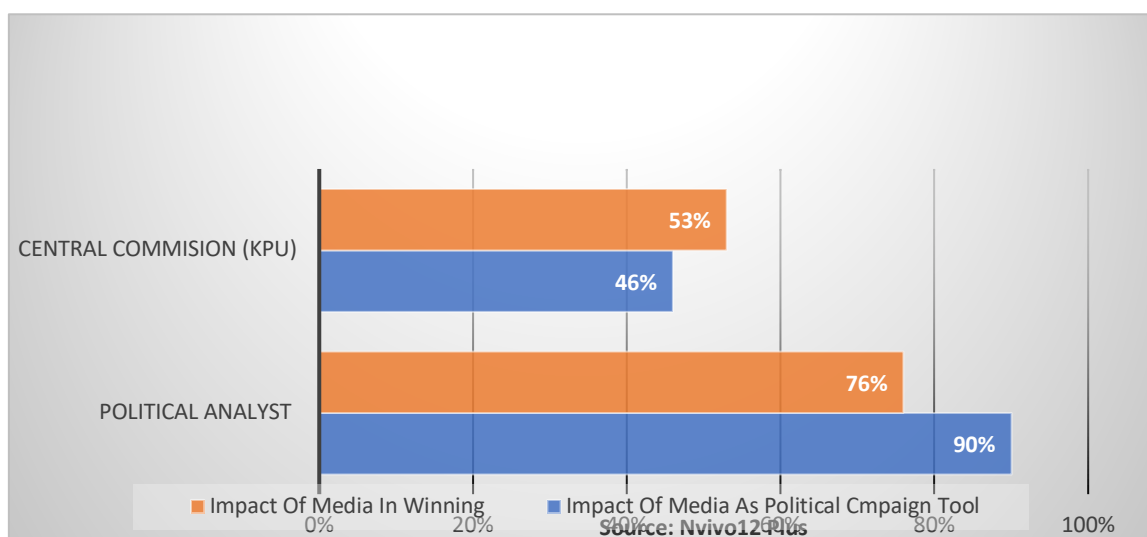
Then, it can be seen that the candidate pair Number 1 in using the media for political campaigns is very useful to lead public opinion. The candidates use the media as a campaign tool in political campaigns not only for leading the opinion of the adult community, but this campaign war can bring young people to vote or register at the polling station at the general election. Every candidate competes to win votes in the millennial side.

Even so, in the 2019 presidential election, the use of online mass media cannot be considered an influential factor for the victory of a candidate pair. Advanced technology is only a factor supporting the victory of the candidate pair in the general election. The presidential political campaign starts from September 2018 until April 2019. All candidate pairs make every effort to carry out political campaigns using the mass media or online to direct public opinion to become supporters of the candidate pairs.

One thing that must be noted from the president's political campaign through the media is that candidates, do not make public opinion using hate speech. Political campaigns must be peaceful and not attack each other. According to news released by online media Tirto.id (2019), it was revealed that the Presidential and Vice Presidential Candidate pair in Indonesia number 1 used more media as a political campaign tool than pair number 2. Six media were used by the presidential candidate pair in 2019.

Influence and Impact of Mass Media (Online) Uses

Figure 3. Crosstab Query-Results Preview



Source: Data Process by Author (2019)

Analysis conducted by the researchers showed the influence and impact of media as a campaign tool. Data was obtained from online media, especially from political analysts interviewed by the media. In addition, the analysis also proved the impact and influence of the mass media (online) according to political analysts and the Central KPU, which was the reference source related to political campaigns. The role of the media as a political campaign tool, according to political analysts, is very influential in changing public opinion. It was estimated that almost 90% of media use had a significant influence on political campaign activities because it was very easy to influence public opinion as media users.

Meanwhile, political analysts stated that the impact of the media as a political campaign tool was only 76% because they observed the impact of the media as a political tool, not the significant impact of the media as a political campaign tool by candidates. This statement did not match the statement of (KPU, 2019) that political campaigns through the media can be an excellent force for candidates to win the competition by providing positive or negative information. Figure 3 shows that the influence and impact of the media as a means of a political campaign by political contestants is greater than the influence of the media which becomes a tool of victory by a candidate pair.

The results of the analysis using Nvivo12 Plus through crosstab queries, show that the media, as a political campaign tool influences and impacts on the campaign. According to the KPU (see Figure 2), mass media as a political campaign tool for winning candidates is 46%. This result can be considered very influential. The impact of the media on media users is enormous, at 53%. Data obtained from the results of analyses conducted through Nvivo12 plus. Therefore, the KPU must make regulations related to political campaigns by candidate pairs.

The regulations set by the KPU, as stated in Figure 1, aimed to prevent or minimise the adverse effects of the use of mass media (especially online media) that could change opinions and influenced the minds of people in political campaign activities. Some harmful effects that might occur, including inappropriate coverage or fake news (Hoferer et al., 2020). This problem is very detrimental to the election of political leaders, including carrying out campaign activities using unaccountable facts and by using cunning campaigns carried out in the mass media.

The results of research conducted on political campaigns proved that the media had a significant influence on the campaign and had shaped public opinion in choosing their political choices. In this global era, the press is very influential for the success of political objectives in campaign activities by candidates or parties (Anggoro, 2014).

CONCLUSION

We concluded that online mass media was very influential in political campaigns carried out by candidate pairs in political contestation taking place in April 2019. Media were always used to

attack or sell candidates who participated in political contestation. This research also emphasises that mass media (online) had a significant influence as a means of indoctrination by candidates to influence public opinion, which was very important for the victory of candidates in political contestation. Some things really need to be seen related to the use of media as a political campaign tool because it has some adverse effects such as lies, expressions of hatred, and others. Therefore, this study revealed that the impact and influence of the media were very significant in political activities or political campaigns. On the other hand, this research was still limited to seeing the role of mass media (online). This study did not analyse other types of media due to limited costs and time. The researchers suggested the authorities regulate the media used as a political campaign tool so that candidate who is trying to win votes from the public cannot negatively influence society in political contestation.

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